

# THE JERUSALEM POST

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## High Court annuls Schnitzer's Israel Prize

By BATSHEVA TSUR

The High Court of Justice yesterday overturned the decision to grant the Israel Prize for Journalism to *Ma'ariv* columnist Shmuel Schoitzer. Justices Theodor Orr, Dalia Dorner, and Dorit Beinisch ordered Education Minister Zevulun Hammer to resubmit the issue to the prize committee.

The ruling answered a petition by MK Adisar Massala (Labor), who requested that Schnitzer, a longtime correspondent and editor, be disqualified from receiving Israel's highest award because of a racist article written in August 1994.

The article, headlined "Import of blood," referred to the immigration to Israel of members of the Falash Mura from Ethiopia who, Schnitzer wrote, were "contaminated with diseases," particularly as latent carriers of AIDS. In the article, Schnitzer also referred to the Ethiopian immigrants as "blacks." This earned him a censure from the ethics committee of the Journalists' Council.

Massala, who also heads the Unified Ethiopian Immigrants' Organization, said in his petition to the court that Schnitzer's article

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**Azzam called into Egyptian court**  
Israeli Druse Azzam Azzam, on trial for espionage, is surrounded by Egyptian guards at the State Security Court in Cairo yesterday. Story, Page 2.

## A-G: No ethnic bias in decision

By BATSHEVA TSUR and Itim

A call by the nation's Sephardi chief rabbi to "put the ethnic genie back in the bottle" was met yesterday by a rare public statement from the attorney-general in defense of his decision to prosecute Shas MK Aryeh Deri for his role in the Bar-On Affair.

Meanwhile, amid increasing anger in Shas over the affair, Shas

Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron used the occasion to try to calm growing friction generated by Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein's decision to prosecute Deri but not Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, and others in the affair.

At a Jerusalem rally on Wednesday, Deri was cheered by a stadium crowd of some 15,000 when he declared he was being persecuted for his Sephardi origins and religious devotion.

"Not only is it necessary to put the [ethnic] genie back in the bottle, but to destroy it once and for all," Bakshi-Doron told the crowd yesterday, "so we can all feel as one, as one with one heart, and all Jews can be responsible for one another."

Rubinstein, speaking shortly afterward on Israel Radio, said he felt he had to refute charges by Shas Party leaders that there had been an ethnic or religious bias to his decision to indict Deri.

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Releasing the ethnic genie, Page 3

mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef met last night with Labor leadership candidate Ehud Barak and is due to meet today with Labor Party Chairman Shimon Peres.

Over 20,000 worshippers had gathered at the Western Wall in the morning for the Pesach priestly blessing of the Kohanim. They were greeted by the two chief rabbis under a large canopy, and

## 63-year-old woman gives birth

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Imagine coping with a teenager at age 76. That's what the world's oldest known new mom faces. At age 63, the unidentified woman gave birth to her first child after lying about her age to get into an in-vitro fertilization program, doctors said. She delivered a healthy baby girl last year and breast-fed the child.

The woman said she was 50 when she approached the doctors for the treatment. She was actually 60. It took her three years to get pregnant through a donated egg

and her husband's sperm. "Had the individual disclosed her actual age ... she would not have qualified for treatment at USC, since the program uses an arbitrary upper age limit of 55 for women seeking fertility therapy," the program said in a statement Wednesday.

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# Mubarak: Middle East peace is possible

Middle East peace can become a reality if all parties abandon old suspicions and animosities, President Hosni Mubarak said yesterday.

"Middle East peace is not an impossible target and can become a reality if the will of peace overcomes... mutual suspicions and expansionist demands," the Egyptian leader said.

"I call on the forces of peace in the world to support our efforts to save the Middle East peace process," he said in a televised speech marking the 15th anniversary of the completion of Israel's withdrawal from Sinai.

# Two wounded in south Lebanon

By DAVID RUDGE

A Lebanese woman and a Lebanese policeman were wounded during Hizbullah attacks on IDF and South Lebanese Army positions in the security zone yesterday.

The sniper and mortar fire attacks on the IDF and SLA posts occurred near Kfar Tibnit in the Ali Tahr hill range. The IDF and SLA soldiers, who suffered no casualties in the attacks, returned fire.

The woman and the policeman were appar-

ently wounded at the Tibnit crossing point on the northern perimeter of the security zone.

They were treated at the scene and later taken to Marjayoun hospital in the zone.

The incident followed a mortar attack on IDF troops near Talousa village in the eastern sector of the zone. There were no casualties in that attack either and IDF gunners returned fire.

Last night, mortars were fired at an SLA position in the central sector of the security zone and at the Huleh crossing point on the

northern perimeter of the zone. There were no casualties in the incidents, and IDF gunners returned fire.

Hizbullah, meanwhile, maintains that Israel is trying to expand the Grapes of Wrath understandings, designed to exclude civilians on both sides of the border from the fighting, to also include residents of the security zone.

A statement issued by the organization on its Nur radio station, broadcasting from Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, said Hizbullah had adhered to the understandings and had not

once targeted Israeli settlements in the past year.

"Looking back, we see that Israel is trying to expand the framework of the understandings to include the [SLA] collaborators among the protected civilians," said the statement.

"These Israeli attempts have failed however. The understandings cover civilians and not militiamen and in any case the issue of Lebanese civilians, be they inside or outside the security zone, is solely a Lebanese matter," said the statement.

## ANALYSIS

### Releasing the ethnic genie

By SARAH HONG

The entire political arena these days is astir about a bottle and a genie. The talk is that the prosecutors' decisions on the Bar-On Affair have given that bottle a thorough shake and released the ethnic genie that had been confined inside for many blissful years.

Labor leadership hopeful Ehud Barak even instantly knew where to pin the blame. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Barak asserted yesterday, "shall henceforth be known as the splitter of the nation, as the man who incites one half of the people against the other half."

But significantly Barak had nothing but warm words of praise for embattled Shas leader Aryeh Deri, the man who declared before an audience of thousands that the prosecution is persecuting him for no fault of his own, other than because he is Sephardi and religious.

Ehud Barak's reaction is perhaps the touchstone. It indicates more than anything else that the ethnic genie in its latest incarnation is nothing but a political manipulation for transparent political ends. Barak has every interest in blasting Netanyahu, but he also has every interest in coddling Deri, because the pivotal party Shas must not be alienated. Who knows - maybe one day Barak too will need to form a coalition with Deri and make deals with him. After all the previous Labor government, as a lead from page headline from the defunct *Davar* screamed in 1993, had been cooking up a deal with Deri in return for his support on the Oslo process.

No one else is responsible for releasing the genie this time but Deri, the man no one dares criticize and to whom everyone is so nice, attentive and sympathetic. Likud and Labor spokesmen alike could find nothing wrong to say about him, though it is clear that he got everyone into trouble in this affair. Other people, like former justice minister Ya'acov Ne'eman also owe their legal travails to their one-time contact with Deri.

In their calmer moments Shas politicians too admit - though never for attribution - that the Bar-On

episode was Deri's own private war involving his own private court case and wasn't to do with Shas. Deri's own high-ranking Shas colleagues privately express quite a bit of pique about their leader and agree that it is not impossible for someone to attempt extortion without the object of his pressures getting the message and acting on it. Therefore, theoretically, it is not impossible for there to be a charge against the extortionist but not against the ones he sought to coerce.

Still, no one in Shas will dare say an anti-Deri word either. The claim that he is being hounded because of his extraction is a cause worth much political gold and no one in Shas has the courage to spoil a good political thing.

Thus Deri, rather than being the pitiful victim of Israeli politics, is indeed one of the most protected and immune members of it. While tons of mud are being slung at Netanyahu and Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, even after the decision not to charge them, Deri is receiving messages of support from all over the political spectrum because he was, alas, charged.

The fact that Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein who decided to indict him is also religious is explained away within Shas because he is Ashkenazi and the wrong kind of religious. But that's an ethnic point too.

Hanegbi is no pure Ashkenazi, considering his Yemenite-Moroccan roots. Why was he let off the hook despite his ethnic identity? Furthermore, fully half of the government in which Hanegbi serves is non-Ashkenazi.

Neither were those non-Ashkenazi members allocated minor decorative portfolios. The prime minister is flanked by two Sephardim in the most powerful and prestigious cabinet roles - Moroccan-born Foreign Minister David Levy and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who is of Kurdish origins. Shas's own ministers hold portfolios which contain more clout than most other government ministries - Labor and Social Affairs, as well as the Interior.

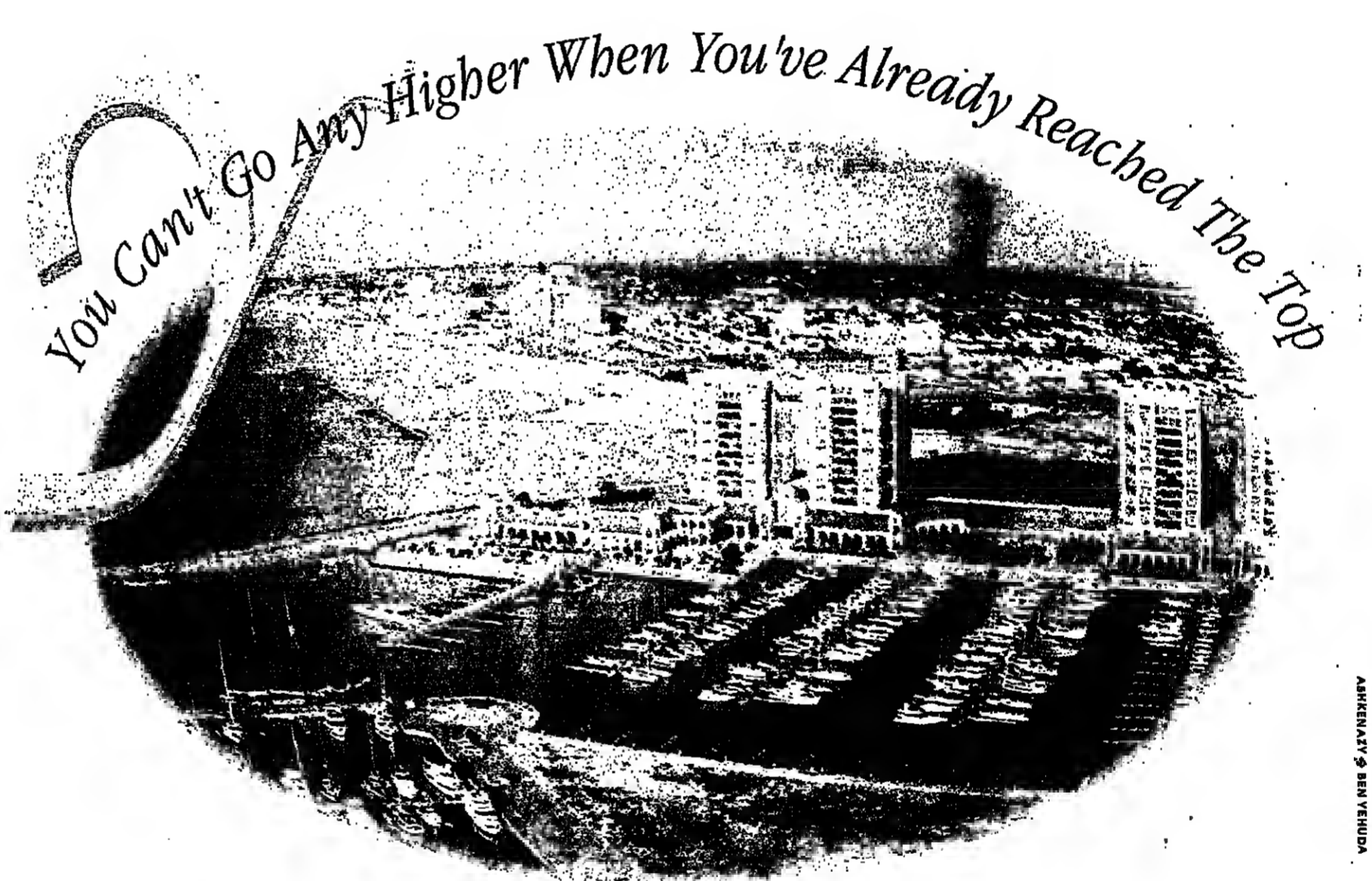
Shas is also in control (under a



### Genocide remembered

Members of Jerusalem's Armenian community demonstrate in front of city hall yesterday to mark the 82nd anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide on April 24, 1915. The date marks the initial execution of Armenian intellectuals and artists by the Turks, at the start of massacres in which 1.5 million Armenians were murdered.

(Bryan McBurney)

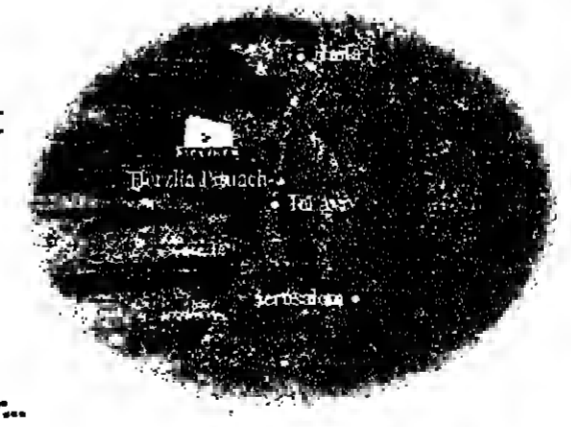


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## Baby killed by falling branch

By DAVID RUDGE

A seven-month old baby girl was killed and her sister was lightly injured at Yeshivat Nehalim near Petah Tikva yesterday when a branch fell on them after apparently being blown from a tree by strong winds.

The toddler from Bnei Brak was killed when the branch fell on her head while she was sitting on the grass with her family close to the tree.

She was treated by Magen David Adom paramedics and taken by ambulance in critical condition to

the Rabin Medical Center-Beilinson Campus in Petah Tikva, where she died of her injuries a half hour later.

Her four-year-old sister suffered light leg injuries and was also taken to Beilinson for treatment.

In a separate incident, four children were injured when the trampoline on which they were playing at an amusement park at Kibbutz Yagur was blown over by wind.

Police said the children were lightly hurt and were taken to Haifa's Rambam Hospital. The facilities at the amusement park were closed and the operator was detained for questioning.

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# Resist Arafat's blackmail

JESSE HELMS

In the past few weeks, Yasser Arafat has led a terrorist Palestinian group to assume it has his approval for acts of terrorism against Israel. He has urged the Arab League to resume its boycott of Israel. As a result, the peace process has plummeted to its lowest ebb in recent memory.

The behavior of Arafat and his cohorts has reduced the "peace process" to scarcely more than blackmail. The Palestinians and their Arab partners have formulated a dangerous either/or threat: Peace on their terms or suffer their boycotts, bombs and stones. All of this seems to be based on the weird presumption that it will have no impact on relations with the United States.

This presumption is terribly wrong. For years it has been obvious that certain realities have been unclear to the Arab parties to the peace process. The Department of State, constrained by the meaningless rhetoric of diplomacy, is ill-equipped to convey those very clear realities. It is long past time that Arafat and Company wake up and smell the coffee.

The American people are not likely to be bullied away from their friendship and support for the State of Israel. Americans want a foreign policy dictated by values, not by realpolitik. They respect democracy, and they like Israel because they feel comfortable with a system of majority rule, of elections, of civil and political freedom.

Congress needs no pro-Israel lobby to instruct us as to why we should support Israel. The US cares about Israel because the values held dear by Americans are reflected in Israel. Those who undertake to subvert these values earn our enmity. We should not

engage with them; we should not trade with them; we must do our utmost to isolate them. (Witness US policies against Iran and Cuba.)

The Palestinians, led by Arafat, have labored too long under the delusion that because they are engaged in an illusory, on-again, off-again peace process with Israel, they have no obligation to

abide by the standards expected of other nations in partnership with the United States. The Palestinians must understand the choice confronting them: They can adopt our values, reject further terrorism, and embrace democracy, or they can join the pariahs.

For other participants in the Arab League's recent hate-fest in Cairo, similar conditions apply. There are indeed relationships with many Arab states that are important to us. But if they undertake to revert to the old boycott days, there are US laws to restrict the scope of our relations, and they will be applied.

These realities must be made completely clear throughout the Middle East, especially in light of the impending final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians. There is little doubt that once the peace process clears this current hurdle, discussions of the ultimate disposition of the

West Bank and Jerusalem can and will commence.

On this, the views of the Congress are clear: Jerusalem is the united capital of the State of Israel, and the US will support its remaining so forever. If this is unacceptable to the Arab parties to the peace process, if they resort to terrorism, boycotts and other failed policies of the past, relations with the United States will surely deteriorate.

US acceptance of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a negotiating party in the peace process was conditioned on the PLO's decision to renounce terrorism. For those willing to embrace the fantasy that terrorists are, somehow, freedom fighters, the PLO's words alone were enough. For the rest of us, renunciation of terrorism demands that Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must not merely eodenn acts of terror, but must also actively prevent such acts and imprison the perpetrators.

I confess disinterest in the exigencies of Palestinian balance-of-power politics that "require" Arafat to entertain Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

If, during the final status talks, we are obliged to look forward to PLO-sanctioned acts of terrorism and a chorus of threats from the Arab League, Israel and its friends will have little incentive to attend such talks. That would not, of course, reflect any change in the US relationship with Israel, which is based on shared values. But it will bode ill for the US-Palestinian relationship, which, after all, is based on the peace process and little else.

Sen. Jesse Helms is chairman of the US Foreign Relations Committee and author of the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act.

## Americans want a foreign policy dictated by values, not by realpolitik

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# Winds of change

MOSHE ZAK

Benjamin Netanyahu is a grand master at understanding what the masses expect of him. But when it comes to selecting his aides and developing a rapport with them, his judgment is completely lacking.

During his 10 months in office, Netanyahu has more than once been forced to rescind appointments already made public, and an even greater number still in the planning stage. The most notorious example is Dan Avi-Yitzhak, his first choice as attorney-general, who ended up as the main witness against him in the Bar-On inquiry.

The unavoidable conclusion - one to which Netanyahu immediately agreed upon release of the attorney-general's findings - is for him to abdicate his exclusive authority in selecting people for key positions, and give it to a ministerial committee.

Altering the procedure for selecting candidates for top-level jobs indicates an upheaval in his method of governing, and there is already talk in the cabinet of further changes. Given this, Netanyahu will be left no choice but to accept the end of the "presidential era," and to come to terms with the conventional parliamentary system in effect prior to the passage of the law on direct election of the prime minister.

Under the previous system, the prime minister was the first among equals. Unlike in the US, cabinet members were party to decisions, and did not just do what they were told by the boss. Netanyahu will now be forced to include other ministers in the appropriate discussions and decisions, but it is safe to assume that this will not be the end of the story.

Cabinet ministers will take a more active role, and will not be asked to merely ratify decisions made without consulting them.

This will be the first outcome of the Bar-On Affair. The second will be the shelving of plans to form a national unity government.

The main pressure to create a national unity government did not come from Shimon Peres, but from Bill Clinton. Though repeatedly stressing that he does not intend to intervene in Israel's internal affairs, Clinton recommended that such a government be established

## As a result of the Bar-On Affair, 'presidential' politics, national unity and talks with Arafat could all be suspended

to every Israeli he spoke with, including Leah Rabin.

The bitter struggles which erupted between the government and the opposition following the Bar-On Affair pushed the issue of national unity to the back burner. The opposition's demand that Netanyahu resign will not encourage him to offer partnership in the government to Peres. Thus, at least in the near future, national unity is dead.

THE effects of the affair will also be felt in the peace process. Indeed, Clinton hurried to express the hope that the crisis would not disturb the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. But a great divide separates his hopes from the difficulties in which the Israeli government will be wallowing - even after the failure to indict Netanyahu.

The opposition will not cease its efforts to bring about the establishment of a state commission of

inquiry into the public ramifications of the Bar-On Affair. It will petition the High Court of Justice and work through the Knesset State Control Committee.

The pressure on the government will grow, and it is doubtful whether the prime minister will be able to focus the kind of attention required to plan for the negotiations on the final-status arrangement and the tough bargaining with the Palestinians which awaits him.

It is possible that Netanyahu will want to prove that it's business as usual in his government, despite the opposition's organized campaign to delegitimize him and topple his government. As a result, he will rush into talks with Yasser Arafat, even at the cost of forgetting his promise that there will be no negotiations until the Palestinian Authority proves it is fighting terrorism.

The resumption of negotiations with the Palestinians will please the Clinton administration, but will not forward an agreement. The government cannot deal with both the pressures of a commission of inquiry and the pressures of resolving the issues needed to reach a final-status agreement.

While Rubinstein and Arbel did not find enough evidence to indict Netanyahu for breach of trust, the public debate which arose from the publication of their findings has weakened the government. And it is dangerous to conduct complex negotiations at a time of internal weakness.

Thus, in spite of himself, Netanyahu will be forced to slow the pace of the talks with the Palestinians, and not to speed them up as he had intended. The negotiations will have to wait for the dust to settle on the Bar-On affair.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.



# An Israeli still stuck in Egypt

P. DAVID HORNIK

The trial of Azzam Azzam, the Druse Israeli arrested in Egypt on grounds of being an Israeli, or on trumped-up spy charges, began yesterday. I was reminded of Azzam's plight when a couple of friends told me they were planning to take a short vacation in Sinai.

Normally I hate to moralize to my friends. But I make an exception when it comes to visiting Egypt. So I reminded them of things they already know: that Egypt's media is full of gutter antisemitism; that its government treats Israel as an enemy in the diplomatic sphere, pressuring and threatening it; that while tens of thousands of Israelis keep visiting Sinai and even Egypt proper, Egyptian tourism to Israel is almost totally forbidden.

Furthermore, while my friends enjoy themselves in Sinai, marveling at its wonders, their fellow-Israeli Azzam Azzam is being persecuted there, and it would be decent at least not to set foot in Egypt so long as Azzam is held prisoner. It might have been a good idea

to leave an empty chair for Azzam at our Seder tables. Leaving an empty chair for our missing servicemen is fine, but doesn't Azzam deserve notice too? That however, would be

Israeli soldiers and Prime Minister Netanyahu clasped his hand and declared him a dear friend. During the Bar-On Affair, opposition politicians have seethed with outrage at the dubious activi-

## We should have left an empty chair at the Seder table for Azzam Azzam

impolitic; it might rile our friends the Egyptians.

THIS holiday season, when we celebrate Pesach, Independence Day, and the rest, is a good time to point out that we have a problem with national pride. Others can murder, maim, imprison us and we're willing to forgive and forget, so long as they smile at us and say the word peace.

It happened last September at the White House meeting after the Hasmoean-tunnel violence. Yasser Arafat had given a green light for a murderous attack on

to conflict and violence, that they're willing to give up not only land but elementary self-respect.

They believe, fallaciously, that by advertising its weakness and desperation, Israel will be rewarded with peace. Our "reward," instead, is the suicide bombers of Hamas and Arafat, the sneers and contempt of Mubarak, who knows he can get away with vile propaganda, the framing of an Israeli, and a massive military buildup directed at Israel.

The trek from slavery to the Promised Land is an arduous one. At this time of year, we should remember the loyal Israeli citizen who stays in Egypt because he's imprisoned there.

As for the rest of us, we should act like free, dignified people dwelling on our own land. That means insisting on the human rights of all Israelis, and refusing to move an inch toward any phony "peace" until those rights are honored.

The author is a writer and translator living in Jerusalem.

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# Algerian rebels slay 42

PARIS (Reuters) - Moslem rebels backed to death 42 people in a village south of Algiers, the second massacre in Algeria within 24 hours, Algerian newspapers said yesterday.

The victims, in Omaria village, Medea district, included 17 women and three babies, savaged by killers wielding axes and swords early Wednesday, said *El Watan* newspaper.

There was no immediate official confirmation, but *El Watan* is normally well-informed on security issues. Algerian authorities have in the past remained silent on similar killings which have subsequently been independently

confirmed.

The slaughter brought to more than 300 the number of people killed in recent weeks and coincides with Algeria's countdown to its first parliamentary elections in more than five years.

Attackers moved into Omaria village only 24 hours after 93 people had their throats cut or were hacked to death with farm tools during Monday night in the worst massacre in more than five years of violence.

Another newspaper, *Liberte*, said the 42 people in Omaria, about 50 kilometers south

of Algiers, were killed by having their throats cut. Another 25 villagers were wounded, it said.

"This hamlet has already suffered one attack by armed groups during Rantadan in 1996 when 25 peaceful, defenseless villagers were assassinated," *Liberte* added.

News of the latest killing broke as condemnation grew over the earlier slaughter of the 93 people, including 43 women and girls. They died in an isolated farming community Haouch Boughlef-Khemisti, only 25 km south of Algiers.

## Yeltsin names reformer new energy chief

### Sharon's Moscow trip may be delayed

By DAVID HARRIS and news agencies

Boris Nemtsov, the 37-year-old first deputy prime minister appointed fuel and energy minister yesterday, is a popular champion of liberal reforms and a potential successor to President Boris Yeltsin.

His telegenic good looks, mop of dark curly hair and easy charm made him a household name across Russia even when he was still only a regional governor.

The change in personalities has led to a possible delay in National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon's planned trip to Moscow at the end of this month. Sharon is scheduled to meet senior Russian officials and the head of Gazprom, the world's largest gas producer. Sharon will discuss regular purchases of natural gas from Russia, as a potential replacement for the Egyptian gas that Israel is in protracted negotiations to buy.

Yeltsin, who has long admired Nemtsov's youthful energy, drafted him into the government last month to oversee the restructuring of natural monopolies like gas, electricity and railways and also tackle housing reform.

"You can already tip him for president," Yeltsin said of Nemtsov as long as three years ago.

Nemtsov is rumored to be

behind the 66-year-old president's latest crusade against corruption and he also played a role in watering down a controversial union treaty with neighboring Belarus, which has been resisting market reforms.

Earlier yesterday, anticipating the announcement on Nemtsov, Yeltsin spoke of the need to promote younger people to safeguard Russia's reform process.

The move was a new warning to seasoned Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who has seen control of economic reforms shift away from him under the reshuffle and whose hopes of succeeding Yeltsin in the year 2000 appear to be receding.

A recent survey by the Public Opinion Foundation named Nemtsov as the most trusted Russian politician, ahead of other potential future rivals for the presidency like populist Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and former security chief Alexander Lebed.

Nemtsov has made clear in a book soon to hit Russia's stores that he wants to go down in history as a man who made life better for ordinary Russians. "My success will be absolute when people start living better and, if my investment in this success is visible, when people say 'it was so-and-so in the Nemtsov times and now it is different,'" he wrote.

## 4 sentenced in Jewish cemetery desecration

PARIS (Reuters) - A French court yesterday jailed four neo-Nazis for up to two years for desecrating a Jewish cemetery in southern France in 1990 in an attack that caused revulsion throughout the world.

The Marseille court sentenced the two ringleaders, Olivier Fimby and Patrick Laonegro, to two years in jail, the maximum term. The other two defendants, Yarnick Garnier and Bertrand Nouveau, received 20-month sentences.

Garnier's confession last July led to the arrest of his accomplices six years after the attack in Carpentras, which the then Socialist government blamed on the ideology of extreme-right National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen.

The desecration, in which the recently buried body of Felix Germon was dug up, his body sodomized with a beach umbrella, and 34 graves wrecked, shocked France.

All four defendants, in their late 20s or early 30s, expressed remorse for the desecration in court. But Fimby and Laonegro said they still admired Nazi ideology while the other two said they had since abandoned fascist views.

At the time of their arrests, investigators said, all four were either members or sympathizers of the tiny Nationalist French and European Party, which became known in the 1980s in connection with a series of attacks on Arab immigrants.

## Le Pen seeks 20 seats in French elections

PARIS (Reuters) - Far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen said yesterday he hopes his National Front party will win 20 seats in France's forthcoming election, enough for it to form its own parliamentary group in the National Assembly.

The Front, which wants to ship home millions of immigrants and institute a preference for "native-born French people" in jobs, welfare and education, currently has no seats in the assembly and opinion polls show it winning only a few in the May 25 to June 1 polls.

Group status would enable Front deputies to join legislative committees and draw on assembly staff and other resources, including better media access.

Le Pen set the goal of 20 seats while releasing the names of Front candidates standing in 566 of France's 577 electoral districts.

But the outspoken National Front leader insisted he had not yet decided whether he himself will run.

Asked about jibes by rival politicians that he would not run because he was afraid of losing, Le Pen replied: "I often learn lessons from my political colleagues, but these are rarely lessons of courage."

Although his name does not appear on the National Front slate, he insisted that all the party's candidates "would be delighted to give up his spot" so that he could run.



Jean-Marie Le Pen (AP)



Prime Minister John Major coughs as Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke returns to his seat after speaking at an election news conference yesterday in London. Major said the Labor Party was proposing "to fill the last week of the election frightening the sick, the elderly and the vulnerable by spreading deliberate fibs and scare stories they know we have denied." He appealed to voters to give his government credit for Britain's low inflation and falling unemployment. Opinion polls have turned erratic in the past week, but most show Labor with a strong lead of around 20 percentage points.

## UK anti-abortionists lose court bid on broadcast

LONDON (Reuters) - Anti-abortionists yesterday lost their High Court bid to be allowed to transmit an election broadcast showing dead fetuses.

The British Broadcasting Corporation said the broadcast by the Pro-Life Alliance, a single-issue party with 56 election candidates in the May 1 poll, was "offensive under BBC guidelines and cannot be transmitted in the present form."

Independent television network ITV also said the content was unsuitable for broadcasting.

The Pro-Life Alliance contested the decision in the High Court where Justice John-Dyson ruled: "I am in no doubt that the decision of the BBC falls within its margin of appreciation, notwithstanding that issues of freedom of expression are at stake in this case."

The broadcast had been due to be shown on national television in Britain yesterday. Any party fielding 50 candidates in Britain's election is entitled to a five-minute slot on national television to advertise its policies.

## Zaire rebels allow UN workers to head for refugee camp

KISANGANI, Zaire (Reuters) - Aid workers headed under rebel escort to camps in eastern Zaire yesterday where villagers had reported fierce fighting between Rwandan refugees and rebel forces.

Witnesses said a five-vehicle UN convoy and a carload of journalists escorted by two pickups carrying rebels left the northeastern city of Kisangani for the camps to the south.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR and some journalists were earlier yesterday told by rebel authorities to be on standby for a trip to the camps, sealed off by rebels since Monday.

UNHCR fears that many of the 80,000 Rwandan refugees south of Kisangani have already fled because of fighting Tuesday.

The rebels allowed access after UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he was "shocked and appalled by the inhumanity" of their action which he said was killing refugees by starvation.

Zairean villagers said Wednesday Tutsi-dominated rebels had killed many Rwandan Hutu refugees at Kasene, 25 kilometers south of Kisangani, where 55,000 were in makeshift camps.

They said a pitched battle between rebels and refugees accompanied the slaughter Tuesday at camps near Kasene.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila dismissed the reports as "total nonsense," saying Rwandan Hutu militiamen among the refugees attacked villagers and rebels intervened to stop the fighting.

Rwandan state radio said Wednesday fighting had been going on for two days between rebel forces which were ambushed by former Rwandan troops and Interahamwe militiamen among the refugees.

It said the rebels initially intervened to restrain Zaireans who had attacked the camps and looted food aid from a train.

Aid workers have accused the rebels of orchestrating attacks on aid vehicles and looting of aid since Friday after delaying until May 5 a UN airlift of up to 100,000 refugees south of Kisangani.

Annan told reporters in New York the refugees lived in deplorable conditions and promises to allow humanitarian agencies to help them had not been kept.

"I have therefore appealed to the international community to work with me in pressing Kabila and those in the region who back him, to push him to allow assistance to the refugees," Annan said.

## Lebanese merchants face trouble in Zaire

LUBUMBASHI (AP) - The knock at Jaber Fadel's door during a late dinner with eight fellow Lebanese turned out to be a chilling sign of change for the prosperous and often hated merchants.

Police from the rebel forces took control of Zaire's second-largest city had arrived to take them away for questioning. They were released two hours later, but the message was clear: Rebels fighting to topple Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko were in charge and Lebanese businessmen with ties to the Mobutu regime were in trouble.

"What makes the Zairean people mad is that a large portion of the Lebanese collaborated with the military and political authorities," said Kalam Mbuyi, a Lubumbashi lawyer who has Lebanese clients.

Some Lebanese admit they dealt with a corrupt system - usually with payoffs - to get ahead.

Now they face the envy of poor Zaireans and the animosity of rebels who suspect them of helping to smuggle and steal the country's wealth during Mobutu's 32-year regime.

## War criminal, awaiting deportation, dies in Canada

TORONTO (AP) - A convicted war criminal whom Canada sought to deport reportedly died before his case could be settled.

Joseph Nemzila, 83, of Oshawa, Ontario, moved to Canada in 1950 from Slovakia, where he had been convicted of taking part in Nazi war crimes.

He died last Friday, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reported.

Last August, a Federal Court judge ruled that Nemzila should face a deportation hearing. But Nemzila's lawyer said appeals could tie up the case for years.

Government lawyers said Nemzila killed Slovak citizens during World War II and commanded a paramilitary unit that deported Jews to Auschwitz.

He was tried in absentia in 1958 and sentenced to five years in prison for murder.

## Turkey opposition seeks probe

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkey's chief opposition party yesterday requested a parliamentary probe of the interior minister, adding to pressure on the Islamist-led coalition.

The Motherland Party asked for the probe into claims minister Meral Aksener had abused her position in the removal of national police chief Alaadin Yuksek in a clandestine, overnight sacking last month.

"It is an abuse of duty to start a (new) public official in a post during a night operation which did not conform with the law," said the demand presented to the speaker of parliament's office.

The motion, which must be considered by parliament within a month, could be a fresh test of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's coalition with conservatives.

The military-dominated National Security Council in February ordered the government to crack down on what it saw as rising Islamist activism since the coalition came to power last June.

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we extend our heartfelt  
condolences  
on the passing of his wife

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The consecration of the tombstone of the late  
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For information phone 03-5274850

The Family

To the Herzog Family  
Our deepest condolences on the passing of  
**CHAIM HERZOG**  
Sixth President of the State of Israel

Sammy and Jeanette Haneln  
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To the Herzog Family  
Our deepest sympathy on the passing of  
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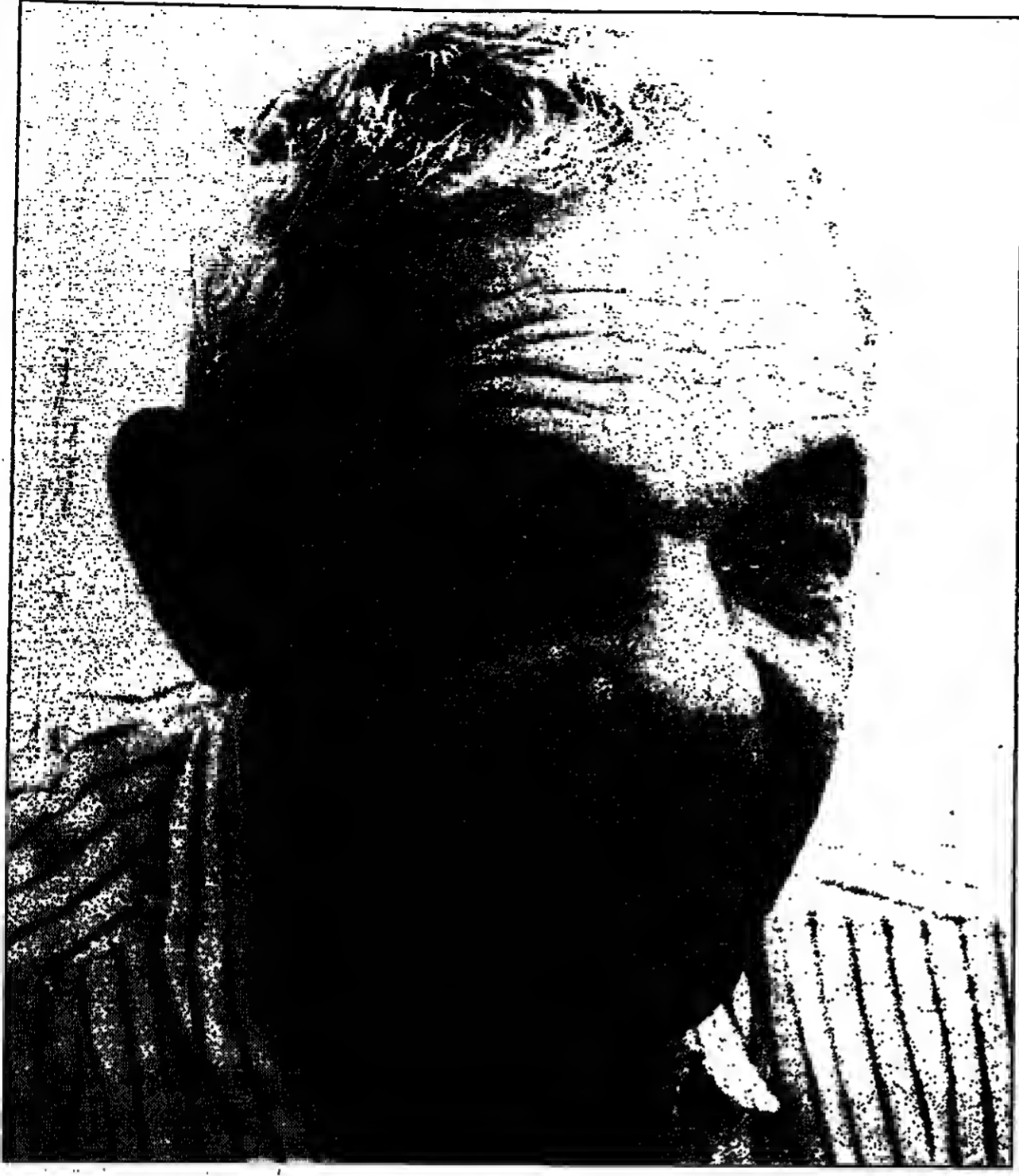
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הכבוד והרחמים

# NEWS in FOCUS

The Jerusalem Post Friday, April 25, 1997

## A heavy-hearted decision



Harel: I don't know if we made the right decision or not.



Sharansky: As far as public norms were concerned, it stank.

(Alon Ron/Israel Sun)

### Because of land and peace

Before publication of the attorney-general's report on the Bar-On Affair, MK Yehuda Harel, chairman of the Third Way, said that if the report was especially critical of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the other principals in the scandal, his party would leave the government.

After publication, Harel described the report as "very grave." Yet the Third Way decided not to leave. Why? Because of land and peace, Harel said in an interview.

"If we leave, the government won't fall anyway and the peace process will be finished," Harel said, arguing that the Third Way is the coalition's strongest supporter of the peace process.

Beyond that, he said that "if we leave, the government will move in the direction of the National Religious Party, and when it comes time to give back territories - because that's what the Americans want - they won't give back Samaria, they'll give back the Jordan Valley instead."

The Third Way, which has four seats in the Knesset, was founded mainly by kibbutzniks, moshav members and military men who left the Labor Party after it moved too far left for their taste during the Rabin regime. The party has close ties to the Jordan Valley and the Golan Heights, both because it

sees these areas as critical to Israel's security, and because the settlers there are, in the main, from the Labor movement.

Harel said that in the weeks leading up to publication of the Arbel-Rubinstein report, he sounded out Labor leaders on their attitude toward keeping the Golan and the Jordan Valley, with an eye toward finding out if the Third Way had an option of bolting the government and following Labor to new elections.

He came away from these meetings convinced that Labor would trade away the Golan and the Jordan Valley for peace treaties, which left the Third Way with nowhere to go.

But the party has an image of integrity - its leader, Internal Security Minister Avigdor

Kahalani, left a promising career in Labor because of his allegiance to the Golan.

The Third Way's members claim to have high principles on matters other than borders. Would the party have stayed in the government no matter what the report said - even if Netanyahu was indicted - because of its commitment to the Jordan Valley and the Golan?

"No," Harel replied. "On political grounds our place is with this government, but sometimes things happen that are so bad you can't swallow them. The question was whether the report reached that point or fell short." By a vote of 8-4 with three abstentions, the Third Way secretariat decided that the report fell just short of unswallowable. The majority included all four of the party's Knesset members.

"We made the decision with a heavy heart," Harel said. There are conditions attached - demands that Netanyahu make changes, chief among them "that he stop attacking the media. The administration's attacks against the police, the State Attorney's Office and the Supreme Court all must end, but first on the list is the media," Harel said.

Is he at peace with the decision to remain in the government? "I don't know if we made the right decision or not," he replied. "Time will tell."

**The two parties most likely to bolt the government over the Bar-On Affair findings were Yisrael Ba'aliya and the Third Way. Why did they stay? Larry Derfner speaks to party leaders Yehuda Harel and Natan Sharansky**

Right after Channel 1 reporter Ayala Hasson broke the Bar-On story, Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky laid down the bottom line: "If even 10 percent of this story is true, this government has no right to exist."

After the attorney-general's report came out, Sharansky declared: "There isn't 25% here, there isn't 10%, there isn't 1%." With seven seats in the 66-seat coalition, the departure of Sharansky's Yisrael Ba'aliya party could bring down the government, but they decided to stay on.

In an interview, Sharansky tried to clarify what his yardstick was, what all these percentages meant: "All along I felt that if there was a criminal conspiracy, and the prime minister played an active role in it, that would be 100%. If there was a criminal conspiracy and he chose to shut his eyes to it, that would be 10%."

Sharansky said that after the report came out, he asked Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein if there was proof that Netanyahu had "closed his eyes" to a crime, and was told there wasn't.

But what about State Attorney Edna Arbel's statement that even though there wasn't enough proof to indict Netanyahu, "a real suspicion" remained that he knowingly lent his hand to an attempt to corrupt the office of attorney-general?

"We didn't need an investigation to confirm that there was a suspicion. But suspicion is not proof. I'm not going to take such a fateful decision on the basis of a suspicion," he said.

Sharansky is well aware that he is a symbol of integrity in Israeli politics, and that he is trusted and respected by people across the political spectrum.

Wasn't he worried that by staying in the government, his image would be tarnished, and many of his admirers would be disappointed in him?

"I think people were satisfied that whatever decision I made on this matter, it would not be out of personal or career considerations. As long as I'm at peace with myself, then I feel I've fulfilled my responsibility," he said.

"There probably will be a lot of people disappointed with me, but what really disappoints me is that all the reaction I've gotten from people has been political." Meaning that people in the government congratulated him, and people in the opposition criticized him? "Yes," Sharansky replied.

For all this, he is far from being at peace with what the report turned up about the government's functioning in the Bar-On appointment. "As far as public norms

Continued on Page 10

### 'No reason to be proud'

**"You have to know more than just how to achieve power; you have to know what to do with power once you get it."**

## TWO DAYS ON THE GOLAN

Widely recognized as perhaps Israel's most important security asset, the Golan is for the moment on the back burner. But it won't be there for long. So what better time than now to join Shorashim and The Jerusalem Post for an in-depth, English-speaking two day tour of the area. We'll visit the settlements, examine the security issues and view the terrain, the animals, the water and the beauty.

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**CORRECTION**  
The James Carter Quartet will perform on May 29 and not as stated in the ad on the second page of the Magazine.

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# End of the presidential reign

The Bar-On Affair did not cut short Netanyahu's term as prime minister, but it has put an end to his presidency, Sarah Honig writes

Soon after it became known that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu would not be charged over the Bar-On Affair, Meretz leader Yossi Sarid solemnly pronounced Netanyahu's government dead. But Sarid may have only given voice to his wishful thinking. He surely did not check for vital signs.

Had he followed impartial diagnostic procedure, he would have had to admit that the patient is alive and kicking. He is by no means better off after the near-fatal bout with acute Bar-Onitis, but curiously his life expectancy may actually have been extended — providing the High Court doesn't pull the plug on Netanyahu's lifeline.

Many in Netanyahu's own Likud party likened his administration to a young upstart injured in an accident to which his recklessness was a contributing factor. While the doctors tried to mend a fractured bone, they came across a potentially disastrous tumor and removed it. The patient will not be the same after the excision and will certainly be unable to do all that he thought he could before. But because he underwent the painful procedure, he was perhaps saved from a malignancy which would have eventually claimed his life.

The report released by Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein and State Attorney Edna Arbel said there was insufficient evidence to indict the prime minister, but "substantial suspicion" that a serious and criminal breach of trust had occurred.

Most of the Likud's in-house diagnosticians identified Netanyahu's affliction as a Presidency Syndrome. This, they say, caused Netanyahu to behave like an American president rather than like the familiar Israeli prime minister of the known genetic mold, who must take careful account of every last coalition cell. They even claim to have isolated the root cause of the malady — it is a contamination traceable to the direct elections system.

Netanyahu is the first prime minister in Israel's history to be able to claim a direct mandate from the people and not, theoretically, to depend on the good-will and petty foibles of those around him. Likud MK Uzi Landau, who had long warned of the dangers to democratic health by the introduction of direct elections, figures that "in an administration in which the prime minister is part of a team rather than a solo player, he is less susceptible to disease. This is not necessarily always so.

"We saw many abuses under Labor in the old system, most recently the stealing of right-wing votes by granting personal favors to Tsomet's Gonen Segev and Alex Goldfarb. This was perhaps among the ugliest and most putrid sores on the flesh of Israeli public life," maintains Landau.

"But in general, a prime minister who remains attuned to those around him, rather dismissing their advice and warnings, has a far better chance of staying healthy."

LIKUD INSIDERS say it was the quest for a "non-establishment" attorney-general that led to Bar-On's appointment. In the view of Netanyahu and those near him, the Left, even when out of power, continues to be this country's establishment, while the Likud provides a unique precedent in political-science history. Though it forms the government, it remains not only outside the country's establishment, but is constantly attacked by it.

The problem, say Likud insiders, was the way Netanyahu went about finding a "non-establishment" attorney-general. "Had it not been handled with the high-handedness of an American president, everything might have even worked out for Netanyahu, even if his attorney-general had ended up being someone else," says Communications Minister Limor Livnat, one of Netanyahu's harshest critics lately. She had considered bolting the government after



The government is still reeling over the Bar-On Affair, but the blow was far from fatal.

(Flash 90)

the redeployment moves and in the Bar-On Affair had one foot out already, until the decision not to indict Netanyahu, and the softer-than-expected criticism of him, allowed her to step back.

She and like-minded ministers now hope that the prosecution's scalpel removed the last of Netanyahu's presidential tendencies and that no trace vestiges are left to grow back.

The ministers hope that Netanyahu will get back on his feet, but as their man, as no more powerful than the somewhat disabled past prime ministers to whom local politicians have developed a functional tolerance.

The bottom line of the Bar-On affliction is that it cost Netanyahu his presidency. The consensus in the Likud is that, as he recuperates, Netanyahu will be forced to swallow bitter pills. He won't be able to ignore his ministers. He promised not to and the wary

ministers can now be counted on to maintain a close watch for any indication of regression or relapse.

For a while at least Netanyahu will be robbed of his independence to deviate from what the ministers interpret as his mandate. He will be hindered by and

indisposed, as well as with those who almost abandoned him. He will have to reward the first and lead his ear to the latter, while they try to twist his arm.

Only the hapless Finance Minister Dan Meridor may be unable to take advantage of Netanyahu's feebleness. He lost

there never was any love lost between the two.

Unlike Livnat, Meridor is eyed with deep suspicion and the Bar-On episode merely served to intensify it. Wagging Likud tongues ascribed accomplice status to Meridor in the anti-Netanyahu drive and some intimated that he would have been happier had Netanyahu fallen.

This may have also been the secret wish of Yasser Arafat, assess some of Netanyahu's aides. PA propagandists were quick to pronounce that to placate local opinion, Netanyahu will now become less yielding.

They know that Israeli politics don't function this crudely, but their instincts that life will be tougher for them are right on the money.

NETANYAHU HAD a hard time passing even minimal concessions in the first phase of with-

**As Netanyahu recuperates, he will be forced to swallow bitter pills. He won't be able to ignore his ministers**

debted to those who strongly supported him, as well as to those who did not. As he becomes more robust he may try to break free, but for now, as long as he remains somewhat infirm, he will need to massage egos of friends and foes alike and to at least be seen to consult with those who supportively nursed him when he was

much of his golden-boy popularity, and those who expected him to trigger the domino effect to topple the Netanyahu government will question his integrity now. Netanyahu clearly cannot afford vendettas and he will not appear to touch a hair on Meridor's head. But Netanyahu was to begin with coerced to appoint Meridor and

## Bar-On = Watergate? No comparison

Americans here don't believe the present problems plaguing the government bear any comparison to America's most famous political scandal, Elli Wohlgeleitner reports

Comparisons between the Bar-On Affair and Watergate have been bandied about a lot since the attorney general's decision on Sunday. Is Israel going through a similar crisis? Will this government fall like Nixon's did? Was the constitutional crisis then comparable to the calls for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to resign now?

Ask Americans who are living here, and the unanimous consensus is a resounding no.

"The real issue of Watergate was not the crime itself, it was the coverup and the tremendous arrogance and disregard for public sentiment," said Rabbi Stewart Weiss, formerly of Chicago, who directs the Jewish Outreach Center in Ra'anana.

"I think that's what really ultimately did in Nixon, it wasn't so much the crime itself, it was everything that came afterward. Here it really revolved around the act itself, not around any kind of coverup, or revelations day after day."

"I also don't get the sense of

arrogance, and that was something else that you had as a backdrop, this tremendous anti-establishment feeling against the arrogance of Nixon totally stonewalling [the investigation]. You didn't have that same kind of 'us against them' setup that you had then."

Andrew Silow-Carroll, who is here from Washington for two years as a Jerusalem Fellow (an independent educators' program), said that after Watergate, it seems politics as usual naturally includes these kinds of abuses.

"I grew up in a world where you weren't surprised by such acts. I grew up just assuming that [politics] is a cesspool, and the guy you voted for was the guy who swims in the smallest cesspool. But you

just can't compare it to the depth of squalor represented by Watergate, the wiretapping and the dirty tricks, and subverting the entire judicial process."

"This is a 'petty' political payoff that doesn't compare to how Nixon really tried to circumvent the Constitution. Bar-On is a Tammany Hall kind of scandal, it's not a Nixonian scandal."

Deborah Mark from New York agreed, saying that "in Watergate, we felt that Nixon was betraying the system, that he was the deviant from the system, and now everybody thinks, cynically, that this is the system, which is harder than to isolate somebody and say 'you're wrong.' But I don't know if that's

more about us and where we're at.

"The truth is that with Nixon it might have stayed equally vague if you didn't have the tape. That was a very unusual situation where you actually get a soundtrack of conversations. And that was the smoking gun. So here, until we have a transcript of what the conversations were, we'll never know."

Weiss said the difference between the two was the degree of the crime. "There it was a massive coverup and a blatant illegal act. Here it was something that amounted to bad judgment. There's just a seese that they're always cutting these backroom deals and nothing ever really happens with it. The irony is that they didn't even need Stas's votes on Hebron, they had an overwhelming majority."

Silow-Carroll said the better comparison of Netanyahu's problems would be to the current squabbles embroiling President Bill Clinton, "the same sense of, not corruption on the grand scale of Watergate, but on the almost 'petty' scale that seems to be represented by Whitewater, etc. It's more about a real falling in character than a seeming breach of public trust of a criminal act that Watergate represented. The comparison is to the Clinton White House, where most of his problems seem to fall back to a certain kind of crookedness."

The whole comparison to Watergate is false, said Rabbi Micah Halpern, a historian living in Jerusalem who grew up in Annapolis, Maryland, because "the only comparison would be if a crime actually took place, and if the prime minister was someone either behind or knowledgeable of it. And we're so far away from that ever coming into play."

He agreed with Silow-Carroll that the going-ons of the Bar-On Affair were more the workings of politics-as-usual than a grand scheme to subvert justice, and that the only reason that parallels are being drawn between Watergate and Bar-On is because "it's a sense of potential corruption. That

doesn't make a comparison. Corruption happens in government, mistakes are made in government. If that's the comparison, I accept it — mistakes, poor judgment, irresponsible attitudes, looking the other way, etc."

"The reality is that there is indeed corruption in democracies, and Israel's democracy is very young, and as a result it doesn't have things like checks, like congressional committees to check people out."

Mark said the analogy is only valid depending on what is being compared. "If you're comparing the experience of society going through a scandal, or just how crass politics can be, then it's similar. But if you're getting to the point where you're comparing where this leads — who's going to care in 10 years? That's how you can tell how important it is. I don't know too many people who really think much about the Teapot Dome scandal [of 1923], and I'm sure that was very big at the time."

"The Nixon thing is important only because he was the first guy to resign, and it really affected the

**"You just can't compare it to the depth of squalor represented by Watergate, the wiretapping and the dirty tricks."**

decisions of politics for the next 20 years. Jimmy Carter wouldn't have been elected if it wasn't for Watergate, and you can take it from there."

There is one other factor that is fundamentally different in this case, said Mark.

"There's the Sephardi-Ashkenazi element. Watergate had a racial thing. Here you have constituencies feeling that they're getting screwed, and the business with the party and Qvadia Yosef — you didn't have that type of cheering section [in Watergate]. And how that plays out could be how the Bar-On Affair will be long remembered."

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# British Jews set to back Blair

British Labor Party leader Tony Blair has assiduously courted the Jewish community. It looks like it will pay off in next Thursday's elections, Douglas Davis reports from London

British Prime Minister John Major never tires of repeating the mantra that relations between Britain and Israel are closer than ever. And he is right.

Scientific and cultural agreements have been signed, tourism is booming, bilateral trade is burgeoning and there is a regular two-way flow of visits by top government officials, which culminated in a formal state visit to Britain by President Weizman in February. But after 18 years of unremitting Conservative government—first under Margaret Thatcher and, for the past six years, under John Major—the British Jewish community appears ready to join the stampede and sweep the Labor Party's Tony Blair to power next Thursday.

They will be turning their backs on an administration that is committed to the enterprising, up-by-your-bootstraps, family-oriented values which are widely perceived to characterize the Jewish community and which smelted the heart of the "Iron Lady."

At the same time they will be embracing a largely unknown quantity in Tony Blair, who has followed Conservative leaders in assiduously courting the Jewish community, not necessarily for its votes or even its money, but for the power and influence it is perceived to exercise within the elites of the scientific, artistic, media, business and industrial communities.

Blair has repeatedly pledged that he would "not repeat the mistakes of previous Labor leaders during the Eighties," who were regarded as insensitive, if not antipathetic, to Jewish causes, notably Israel.

Blair has been well rewarded: When the media revealed last year that a secret fund had been set up to finance his office, it was also revealed that the architect of the fund was a prominent Jewish accounting firm in London, and that the major donors included leading members of the Jewish community.

Since assuming the Labor leadership three years ago, the solidly middle-class Blair has shaken out many of the old working-class dinosaurs, silenced the screeching New Left and loosened his party's ties to the trade unions, all of which had rendered Labor unelectable in post-Thatcherite Britain.

Then he sat back and watched with evident pleasure as Major, operating with a deeply divided party and an eroding parliamentary majority (which had disappeared altogether by the time the election was called two months ago), appeared to be driven even further to the right by the growing band of Eurosceptical Conservative colleagues.

Blair, a lawyer by training and by instinct, moved in for the kill. He seized not only the moral high ground but also the political center ground, positioning his modernized, born-again New Labor at the heart of the political landscape, traditional Conservative preserve.

By the time Major called the election, Blair had established New Labor as the natural (albeit caring) inheritor of a free-enterprise, free-market Britain that had been the clarion call of the Conservatives.

Blair's message appears to be playing well among the Jewish community, which is liberal on social issues, conservative on economic issues and views the institutions of the European Union as a safeguard against xenophobia and future outbreaks of antisemitism.

And, like much of the British voting public, it is troubled by the perception of an increasingly dysfunctional Conservative



Anticipating victory? Labor party leader Tony Blair (left) holds eight pints of Guinness at the London Press Club lunch this week, while Prime Minister John Major (right) has a laugh during a campaign stop in Scotland.

Party. British Jews are bothered by the Conservative malaise: by charges of a declining commitment to publicly provided health and education, allegations of fiscal and sexual impropriety, and the anti-European sentiments of many Conservative candidates.

They have become so accustomed to "Jews in high places" that they appear unmoved even when the Conservative banner is carried by such promiscuous figures — and "fricoids" — as Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and Home Secretary Michael Howard, both of whom are Jewish.

In truth, Blair is unlikely to produce any substantial improvements on the bedrock health and education issues, which polls have shown to be of particular concern to British Jews; nor is he likely to keep the lid on his own Euroskeptics after the election, whether in or out of government.

"The two leaders are fiddling at the fringes," said one political commentator. "Both promise not to raise taxes while both say they will improve public services. The truth is that both are dancing on the same pocket handkerchief."

The critical difference is that while Major is viewed as a weak leader unable to keep his fractious followers in order, Blair had succeeded in imposing dis-

cipline on Labor candidates and muzzling his malcontents. There is a perception, inside and outside the Jewish community,

that Blair leads a united party; that he has a sharper vision and a more defined sense of purpose.

On Israel, that means support for the peace process (with a strong emphasis on "Palestinian

**Middle East issues seem almost to have dropped off the agenda of the British Jewish community, which had previously always prided itself on its unparalleled links with Israel**

cipline on Labor candidates and muzzling his malcontents. There is a perception, inside and outside the Jewish community,

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On Israel, that means support for the peace process (with a strong emphasis on "Palestinian

rights"), too recognition of Israel's claim to any part of eastern Jerusalem or the West Bank and vigorous opposition to "illegal Jewish settlements."

Sources close to Blair say the Jewish community has oozing to fear from New Labor. A Blair administration, they say, will focus on domestic issues, and what time is left for foreign affairs will be devoted mainly to Europe.

That, however, does little to mollify those who remember the unreconstructed Old Labor and New Left "Israel-haters." They have been silenced for the time being, but some retain substantial grass-roots support within the party and a few will certainly occupy seats on the front

bench of a new Labor administration. There is also concern that while the Major administration

community. All that, however, might be changing. According to Antony Lerman, director of the London-based Jewish Policy Research think-tank, British Jews are three times more likely to believe charity money should go to domestic Jewish causes than to Israel.

And although more than three-quarters of British Jews have visited Israel at least once, other information collected by the think-tank in a major recent survey of British Jews suggests

that their identification with Israel is eroding. "It is clear that the closeness of British Jews to Israel cannot be taken for granted," says Lerman.

The natural, sentimental, core supporters — older, Orthodox members of British Jewry — remain firm, "but the younger generation needs to have a social attachment," he said. "There will be a much more pragmatic relationship between younger Jews and Israel." Analysts speculate widely on the reasons for the apparent decline in concern for Israel among the 350,000-strong community that takes a position on the left of the Israeli political spectrum.

"If British Jews had been asked to decide the outcome of the last Israeli election," said one community leader, "Shimon Peres would have won by a landslide." Some argue that the current downturn in attachment to Israel is a "hijab" caused by the advent of the Likud and the complications that have snagged the peace process.

They say that the network of familial and emotional links that have bound British Jews and Israel for the past half-century is just too strong and complex to untangle; that the level of concern has not fallen, only the sense of urgency. Israel, they contend, is simply no longer perceived to be confronting an immediate military or economic threat.

Others, like Lerman, believe the change is part of a more profound, systemic shift in attitudes: British Jews, particularly since the Thatcher era, have become comfortable and confident in their British skins. They have achieved influence in an environment that is tolerant and largely devoid of the sort of street antisemitism encountered in other European states, such as France.

Moreover, the proliferation of Jewish politicians at the most senior levels in British politics — five in Thatcher's cabinet; two in Major's — served to reinforce an assertive self-confidence that has loosened the community's bonds with Israel.

A future Labor government is unlikely to provide that level of representation for the Jewish community, but the party is at least expected to be represented in parliament by a member who has been described as the "mother of all candidates" — Oona King, a 30-year-old, right-wing, black, Jewish, woman candidate.

King, who is standing in the London constituency of Tower Hamlets, is the descendant of Black American slaves on her father's side and Holocaust survivors on her mother's. She is, she tells her predominantly Bangladeshi constituents, well qualified to deal with questions of racism.

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MIDDLE ISRAEL

We salute you, Alberto



By AMOTZ ASA-EL

While our minds were fixed on Tzahi Hanegbi's latest soccer-stadium horror show, the afkoman was stolen by a short, stern-faced, no-nonsense man in faraway Peru.

were by no means benign, but after everything else had failed, what else besides such an iron fist could put an end to the years of Algerian-style and Maoist-inspired fratricide which cost the lives of an estimated 30,000 Peruvians?

These newly active farmers, shop owners and small-service providers are where it's really at; it is they - not the soldiers, politicians or foreign investors - who embody the burgeoning broad middle classes whose absence obstructs more than anything else the Third World's road to progress.

Indeed, the nicest thing about his eventual disregard of this ill advice was Fujimori's decision to launch his raid without even notifying Tokyo.

Unfortunately, the attempt to butcher Fujimori's leadership failed, mainly because at the end of the day he refused to be taken hostage, whether by local bandits or by foreign plutocrats. For that, all freedom lovers at any time, but particularly Israelis celebrating Pesach, should salute him.

Dry Bones



A VIEW FROM NOV



By MOSHE KOHN

Truth is what you seek, you must rid yourself of the spirit of triumphalism; only then can you prepare to behold the truth.

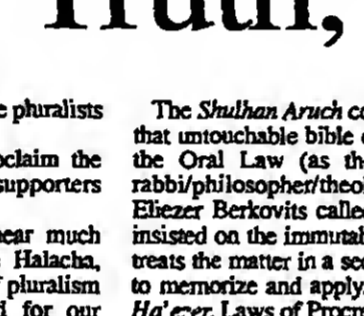
Both parties to the dispute over the Conversion Bill pay lip service to the idea of the unity and creative continuity of the Jewish faith/nation, Am Yisrael. But if Am Yisrael were their real concern, we should long ago have arrived at a compromise on the "Who is a Jew?" issue with which we could all live happily.

Truth, triumph or travesty?

"We are the majority!" cry the pluralists here and abroad.

Both sides ought to bear in mind the assertion of the talmudic Sages Rav and Ulla that knowing how to be silent indicates that one is from a good family (Kidushin 71b).

Shabbat Shalom



By SHLOMO RISKIN

Since bread is the staff of life, one could imagine a festival in any number of cultures emphasizing the miracle of wheat turning into bread. But what can one say about a festival that honors a cracker-like substance, hard to chew, exhausting to prepare?

Striking out for freedom

own realities, its message is that if we want redemption, we can't let nature take its course. And more often than not, we must step in before we are ready, even before the situation seems to be ready.

In practical terms, everyone is aware of how often we put off major decisions by saying that we're not ready. Wait until I get my degree, wait until I meet the absolutely 100 percent perfect man, wait until the children are born, wait until the job offer is exactly what I want, wait until I retire and then...

Shabbat Shalom and a Joyous and Kosher Pesach

The State of Israel came into the world like a newly-baked matza, with no time for skyscrapers or fancy economic timetables. We pushed for freedom in 1948, even as we pushed ahead when we left Egypt, even as we jumped into the menacing Red Sea. We took risks for freedom then and now because, despite the difficulties, we had no choice. Had we let nature take its course, we would have disappeared into the oblivion of assimilation...

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

HIGH TECH

in brief

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

'Wall Street Journal' to use BackWeb software

BackWeb of Jerusalem has supplied The Wall Street Journal with its software, which will allow the paper to broadcast selected new items over the Internet. Using BackWeb's technology, the Journal's interactive Internet newspaper edition is now offering a new service called "Personal Journal News Alert" which automatically supplies news items to the subscriber according to his personal wish list.

Electric Fuel inks pact with Vattenfall AB

Electric Fuel, a Har Hotzvim-based maker of a zinc air battery designed to fuel commercial vehicles, has signed an agreement with Swedish Vattenfall AB that will allow the company to build the first zinc air battery regeneration and refueling plant. Lehman Brothers recently reiterated Electric Fuel's V2 ranking, saying that the deal demonstrates that the zinc air battery has business opportunities in the commercial fleet market. The investment bank also said that Electric Fuel's shares are trading below their potential.

Gemini raises \$3.1m. for Silicon Value

Gemini Capital Fund Management of Herzliya has raised \$3.1m. for Silicon Value, which develops and produces intricate silicon components for the semiconductor market. The company has finished its research and development and is currently in the mass production and marketing stage. Gemini, which manages a \$36m. fund, invested \$2.1m. in the placement.

Gezemet now serves 04 region

Gezemet, the Internet company of Kibbutz Gezer, is now serving the 04 area code region in conjunction with Microdan. Gezemet, which has been operating in the 08 area for the past year, provides an unlimited number of hours on the Internet for \$24 per month.

Golan Electronics wins deal in the Philippines

Golan Electronics has won a \$1.5m. deal to supply a cellular phone network on two islands in the Philippines. The deal has the potential to reach \$6m. in later stages. Golan Electronics, a subsidiary of Tadiran Communications, develops and manufactures small- and medium-sized cellular communication systems.

RAD Data Communications opens in Beijing

RAD Data Communications has announced the opening of its second Asian Pacific regional bureau, in Beijing. China is the second largest market for RAD, which designs and markets a range of solutions for local and wide area networks. The RAD China office will provide marketing and technical support to RAD distributors in the country and will assess and develop other possibilities for technical cooperation and exchange in the country.

Tadiran Telecommunications to reorganize

Tadiran Telecommunications has announced the consolidation of its business systems and access systems divisions. The company said that the change is designed to make the company's marketing strategy more efficient. Tadiran Telecommunications develops products for a variety of telecommunications fields, including digital public switching technologies, access and transport equipment, private exchanges and wireless access systems. The company exports to a number of countries around the world.

Weizmann invents world's fastest semiconductor

The Weizmann Institute's Center for Submicron Research has developed the purest semiconductor in the world. Made from gallium arsenide, the semiconductor allows particles to travel record distances without collision. Previously, Bell Labs of the US held the record.

Gabbai Committee suggests abolishing property tax

By DAVID HARRIS

Abolition of property tax and its replacement by a business property sales tax are the main recommendations of the Gabbai Committee, set up by Deputy Finance Minister David Magen.

The committee, under the chairmanship of former Income Tax Commissioner Yoram Gabbai, will publish its proposals on Wednesday.

The group has been working since December on ways of reforming property tax. Its report will suggest a variety of alternatives, including altering tax levels, but will propose abolishing the tax as the best option.

The annual property tax would be replaced by

a sales tax at up to 2.5 percent on business property, including buildings and land.

During the committee's deliberations, it was felt the direct and consumption tax burdens are generally too high, therefore taxation on the basis of property must be retained.

Property tax, which is not paid on agricultural land, is currently 2.5%.

The proposal to rethink the collection of property tax comes after a 32% drop in revenues between December and February, compared with the same period a year earlier. This has been one of the main contributors to the country's budget deficit, which surpassed NIS 1 billion in the first quarter of the year.

The committee's main task has been to examine the perceived unfairness in the tax. It is argued that while the original aim of the tax was to encourage land sales by private bodies and individuals and to encourage speedy planning and construction, in practice, many landowners do not build on their property, but are still required to pay the annual property tax.

The Finance Ministry has in recent months put on hold discussions on a comprehensive package of tax reforms. The prime minister's economics adviser Moshe Leon recently urged the implementation of reforms, possibly to include a 1% increase in VAT to be offset by reductions in other non-direct taxes.

Central bank interest rates remain unchanged

By DAVID HARRIS

There will be no change in the Bank of Israel's key lending rate next month, Governor Jacob Frenkel announced yesterday. This leaves the rate at 13.9 percent, with the aggregate cut since August holding at 3.1%. May will be the second consecutive month with no change in the rate.

Since August, the central bank has not reduced interest rates by more than 1% in any month.

The decision follows a week of negotiations before Pessah, among Prime Minister Binjamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Dan Meridor and Frenkel, during which the three were unable to reach a conclusion on how to put the economy back on track and in particular how to rein in the budget deficit.

While all three have reportedly agreed there has to be a public expenditure cut of some NIS 1 billion, Frenkel is refusing to bow to pressure from the other two to implement a substantial cut in interest rates.

Frenkel was even less amenable to their requests after the publication of the March Consumer Price Index increase of 1%, particularly in property and fruits and vegetables. Inflation in the first quarter was running at an annual rate of 11%, higher than the government target of 7% to 10% for 1997.

1996 inflation was 10.6%. The bank argues its tight monetary policy led to a considerable reduction in the inflation rate in the latter half of last year. In June, the annual rate was some 15%, but by December it was down to 7%.

Frenkel has made it clear on numerous occasions that monetary policy should be used to achieve the government inflationary targets, leaving the fiscal means available for tackling the budget deficit.

In a statement, the central bank said the decision not to change the rate was based on a variety of developments and the need to meet the inflation target, not just this year, but also the government 2001 target of 4% to 5%.

Meanwhile, the industrialists say the continued high interest rates are hampering export growth and stifling the economy.

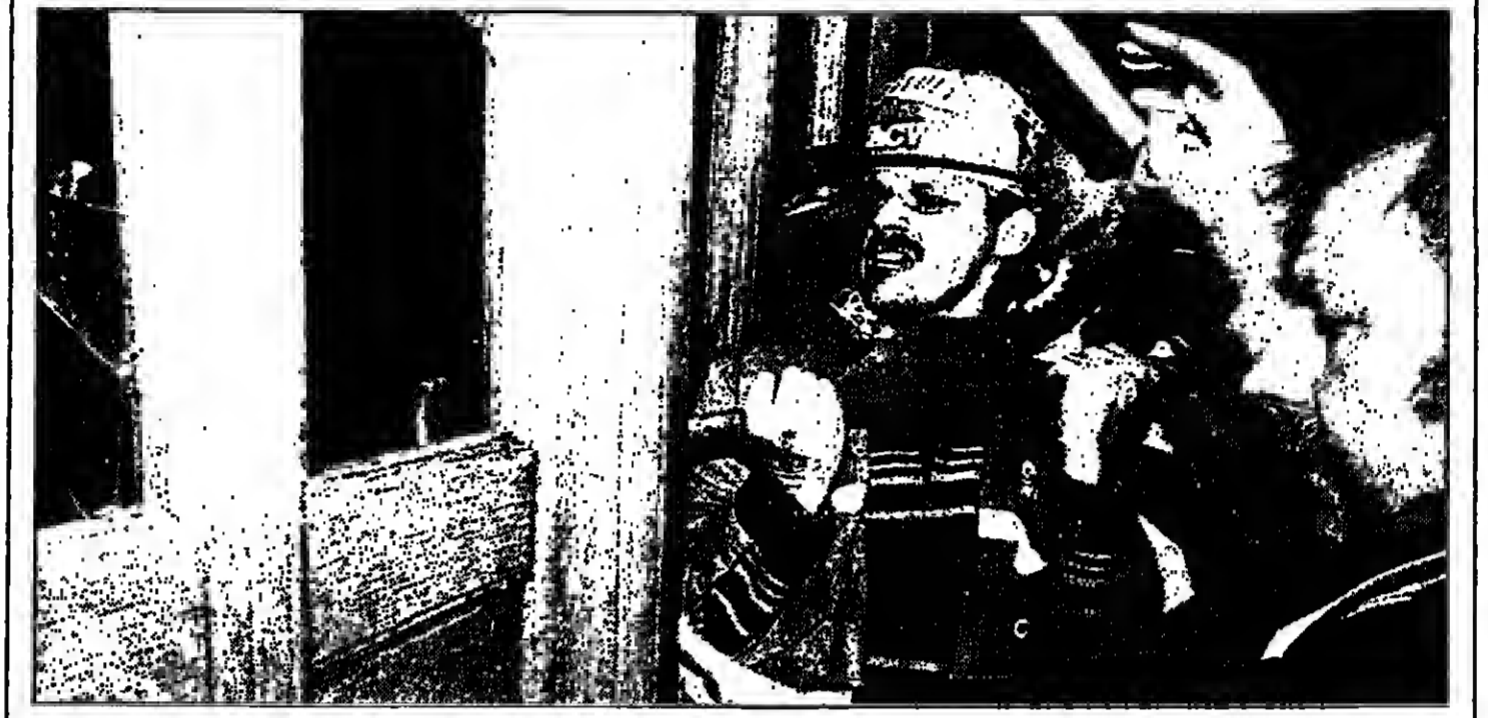
Meridor and former Finance Ministry director-general David Brodet have said 1997 growth will be less than 3%.

However, Brodet maintains that with lower interest rates and the required budget cut 3% growth could be restored as early as next year.

Manufacturers Association president Dan Propoy last night called for an immediate 1% cut in interest rates to be followed by a further 1.5% to 2% cut.

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange closed before the bank's late afternoon announcement, with the Maof Index rising some 0.33% to end the week at 262.36.

The dollar ended the day at NIS 3.4020, up some NIS 0.0110 on yesterday, equalling the high set last Thursday.



Renault worker protest heats up. Workers from the doomed Renault plant at Vilvorde, near Brussels, force their way into the town hall in Lille, France yesterday. Violence erupted when around 150 protesters, opposed to the French company's plan to close the plant, were told Lille Mayor Pierre Mauroy was currently in Paris. Riot police were called in to remove the demonstrators. (Reuters)

France imposes 1998 spending freeze

PARIS (Reuters) - France's government ordered a public spending freeze for 1998 yesterday as the opposition Socialists sought to woo voters ahead of a snap parliamentary election next month with a pledge of no new taxes.

Prime Minister Alain Juppe's office confirmed that ministers had been told to hold 1998 state spending unchanged in nominal terms for the second successive year, meaning a cut of more than one percent in real terms.

But it sought to offset the impression of austerity by trumpeting signs of an economic upturn ahead of the May 25-June 1 election to the National Assembly, likely to be dominated by the issues of unemployment, taxes

and purchasing power.

"Growth is taking off again," Budget Minister Alain Lamassouze said, pointing to what he called robust industrial production figures. He said France might make more tax cuts than planned if economic growth exceeded forecasts for 1997.

The Socialists accused the center-right coalition of trying to secure reelection before imposing draconian new austerity measures to help qualify for a single European currency.

"We will not raise taxes," Aubry, a member of the Socialist leadership, said in an RTL radio interview. The Socialists say they favor the single currency, but not at the price of a further bout of austerity.

"We will simply make a better share-out between (the tax burden on) income from capital and income from salaries, we will rebalance consumer spending and we will introduce a new model of development," she said.

Juppe and Socialist leader Lionel Jospin were to hold their first public rallies later yesterday in what is likely to be a short but bruising campaign after President Jacques Chirac risked his political career by dissolving parliament on Monday.

Aubry said the prime minister was bowing to demands for strict austerity to meet the Maastricht Treaty budget criteria for a single European currency - a deficit of less than 3% of gross domestic

product.

Aubry, daughter of former European Commission president Jacques Delors who was an architect of the treaty, said the 3% target "is not the Bible...the treaty itself says that the trend must be taken into account."

Finance Minister Jean Arthuis denied media reports that the budget faced a slippage because of a tax revenue shortfall.

"Nothing points to slippage in the state budget," he told the business daily Les Echos.

In their first meetings with ordinary voters since the campaign kicked off, Juppe was to travel to the rough and tumble Mediterranean port of Marseille, while Jospin planned to tour several troubled outer Paris suburbs.

Surveys show voters' concerns are dominated by unemployment, at a post-war record of 12.8%.

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ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS table showing Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) and Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates (24.4.97) for various currencies like U.S. dollar, German mark, Pound sterling, etc.

ISRAELI SHARES IN NEW YORK

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE, AMEX, NASDAQ. Lists various Israeli companies and their stock prices.

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MISHTANIM

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists Mishtanim index components and their values.

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TASE ROUNDUP

Shares rise again

Mishtanim 262.10 ▲ 0.58% Maof 262.36 ▲ 0.33%

Shares continued to rise yesterday in the second day of trading after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was freed of the threat of indictment in a corruption scandal, traders said.

The benchmark Mishtanim index of the top 100 shares rose 0.58 percent, or 1.46 points, to 262.10 on an all-share turnover of NIS 91 million against NIS 83 million on Wednesday.

The Maof 25 blue-chip index closed 0.33% higher at 262.36. "In the last two days, people have felt happier without the burden of the Bar-On affair. The issue will remain with us for a long time, but the direct impact on the market has vanished. The market is coming back to its upper trend," said Eli Nahum, head of trading at Zanex Securities.

Table with columns: Key Representative Rates. Lists US Dollar, Sterling, and Mark rates.

Table with columns: NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES. Lists DJ Industrials, DJ Transport, etc.

Table with columns: NYSE STOCKS. Lists various stock market metrics.

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Table with columns: DOLLAR CROSS-RATES (US). Lists various currency exchange rates.

Table with columns: SPOT MARKET METALS (US). Lists various metal prices.

Table with columns: LONDON COMMODITIES. Lists various commodity prices.

Table with columns: NEW YORK METAL FUTURES. Lists various metal futures prices.

Table with columns: LONDON METAL FIXES. Lists various metal fix prices.

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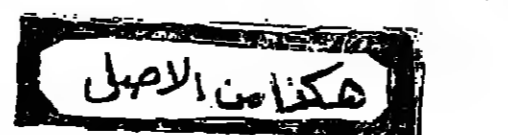
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WALL STREET REPORT

Dow slightly lower

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks were little changed yesterday after pulling back from an early rally led by the technology sector, which had risen following an encouraging earnings report from IBM.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones industrial average dropped 20.47 points to close at 6,792.25, after having surrendered an early 78-point gain. But without a huge gain by IBM, the blue-chip barometer would have lost about 60 points. Broader measures ended mixed after retreating from an early advance and then hovering near Wednesday's closing levels.





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ART GUIDE

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Jerusalem: Jaffa Gate, 628-3698; Shuafat, Shuafat Road, 581-0108; Dar Aldawa, Herod's Gate, 628-2056.

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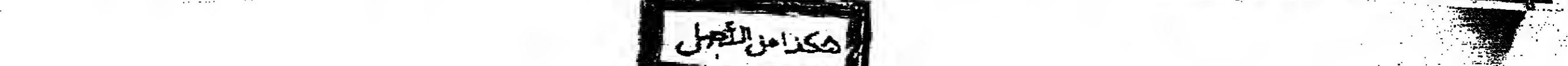
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DELIGHT - Barcelona's Josep Guardiola celebrates after scoring his side's second goal against Fiorentina last night.

# Barca reach Cup Winners' Cup final

## PSG hold on for 3-2 aggregate win over Liverpool

FLORENCE (Reuter) - Three-time winners Barcelona reached the European Cup Winners' Cup final last night after a stormy 2-0 win over Fiorentina whose fans repeatedly threw objects at the Spanish players. They will meet Paris St. Germain who lost 2-0 against Liverpool at Anfield but nevertheless held on for a 3-2 aggregate win.

Other than keeping Brazilian Ronaldo off the scoresheet, there was little for Fiorentina, winners of the inaugural cup in 1961, to be proud of in a tie Barcelona effectively killed off in the first half en route to a 3-1 aggregate win. Two Barcelona players were apparently hit by objects thrown from the crowd in either half. Defender Sergi Barjuan needed medical assistance in the 36th minute and Ivan de La Pena was hit in the 65th when taking a throw-in.

Liverpool, playing with unrelenting pace and passion in contrast to their poor display in the first leg, scored after 12 minutes when Robbie Fowler fired home with an angled left-foot volley and added a second after 79 minutes when Mark Wright headed powerfully home from a corner. But despite almost non-stop attacking by the English side, whose manager Roy Evans dropped skipper John Barnes for the first time in almost a decade, the French side held out.

# Morris felled by Donald after career-best 233

LONDON (Reuter) - Glamorgan opener Hugh Morris was carried off on a stretcher after being hit on the head by a ball from South African fast bowler Allan Donald yesterday.

New Durham captain David Boon, the former Australian test opener, stands between Lancashire and a comfortable victory at Old Trafford.

Nixon, who finished unbeaten on 77, and Ormond (35) joined forces at 206 for nine and took the total to 307 and a first innings lead of 62.

# Olympiakos lifts European title at last

ROME (Reuter) - Olympiakos made it third time lucky when it won the European club basketball championship last night, beating Barcelona 73-58 in the final.

The Greek side, losing finalists in 1994 and 1995, controlled much of the second half and deserved their victory, the most famous in its history. But it was more sadness for Barcelona, beaten finalists in 1996 and now without anything to show from six Final Four appearances in the last nine years.

# Hap. J'lem advances to finals

## Earns berth in Euro League

By RICHARD ZAACKS

Hapoel Jerusalem defeated Maccabi Ra'anana 75-63 in the capital last night to set up a rematch of last season's championship series against Maccabi Tel Aviv.

dunk on a beautiful pass from Doron Shefa and was fouled by Paul Thompson. Steinbauer erupted from the bench and received a technical foul when he threw water on referee Todd Warnick.

# League soccer on hold as national squads ready for Cyprus

By ONI LEWIS

There is no action in the two major soccer divisions this weekend as the national and under-21 teams prepare to take on Cyprus on Wednesday.

Assi Domb and Yossi Abukasis have also been released due to fitness problems. Haim Revivo and Eyal Berkowitz arrived for training and Ronnie Rosenthal is due today.

# Foreign stars to dominate FA Cup final

LONDON (AP) - The most prestigious cup final in English soccer will be a cosmopolitan affair this year, graced by stars from Italy, Brazil, Denmark and France.

Chelsea, coached by former Dutch star Ruud Gullit and spearheaded by Italian striker Gianfranco Zola, is seeking its first major trophy since 1971.

Manager Bryan Robson has been outspoken in defending his foreign legion. "People keep criticizing them, but they've all made a big impact this season," Robson said.

# Juventus stay on course for another title; Ajax fear end of an era

LONDON (AP) - While Juventus seem to get stronger, Ajax are falling apart. Almost a year after the Italian champions ended the Dutch club's reign as European champions, Juve crushed Ajax 4-1 on Wednesday to reach the Champions Cup final again.

# European Cup could end with week-long tournament

MANCHESTER (Reuter) - The semifinals and final of the European Cup could all be played in the same country in a one-week period at the end of the season, if an idea put forward by European champions Juventus is accepted by UEFA.

# Manchester United have been intoxicated by triumphs for five seasons

Manchester United have been intoxicated by triumphs for five seasons at home but have barely had a taste in Europe since winning the Cup Winners Cup six seasons ago.

SCOREBOARD ENGLISH SOCCER - Premier League result last night: Premier League Tottenham 1, Middlesbrough 0.

Manchester United have been intoxicated by triumphs for five seasons at home but have barely had a taste in Europe since winning the Cup Winners Cup six seasons ago. Manager Alex Ferguson, though dismayed by the six chances his team squandered against Dortmund on Wednesday, is confident the experience will make sure the club will do better next season.

Juventus looks like the strongest team in the world at present," said Italy's largest sports daily Gazzetta Dello Sport. "And no doubt it's the favored team against Borussia, a team filled with former Juventus players (Paulo Sousa, Stefan Reuter, Andreas Moeller, Juergen Kohler). The Turin team looks ready to begin a winning cycle after AC Milan."

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Sports Editor: Joseph Horowitz and Gill Lewis

# Church heads discuss Wakf fray with PM

By HAIM SHAPIRO

As thousands of Orthodox Christian pilgrims filled the Old City of Jerusalem in preparation for their Easter this Sunday, the heads of the two major Orthodox churches, together with a leading Roman Catholic, met yesterday with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss a Moslem incursion into the holiest site in Christendom.

The Christian leaders, Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros I, Armenian Patriarch Torokom Manoogian, and Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land Joseph Nazzaro, had earlier written to Netanyahu to enlist his support. The Christian leaders complained that, during its renovations to the Hanqa Mosque adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Wakf (the Moslem religious trust) had built a toilet above the roof of the church. In addition, the Wakf had broken into and appropriated two rooms in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

Netanyahu told the leaders that the government could not accept any change in the status quo in Jerusalem, and in particular the part of the Old City where the church and mosque are located. "It is our duty to look after the future of Jerusalem and we will work to restore the status quo that has existed in the area for more than a hundred years," the prime minister said. He promised them the government would handle the matter with the utmost responsibility.

Also attending the meeting were Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs Yigal Bibi, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, and Jerusalem police chief Cmdr. Yair

Yitzhaki.

Meanwhile, the Jerusalem District Court yesterday issued an injunction ordering the work at the mosque to stop. The order was issued at the request of the Jerusalem Municipality, which maintains that the renovations have been undertaken without a permit.

In addition to their meeting with the prime minister, the Greek Orthodox and Armenian patriarchs followed a busy pre-Easter schedule yesterday, which included the traditional foot-washing ceremonies. Each of the prelates washed the feet of 12 of his clergy in commemoration of the incident in the New Testament in which Jesus washed the feet of his disciples.

Pilgrims attending the rites included many visitors from the former Soviet Union, as well as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, in addition to those from Greece, Cyprus, Ethiopia, and Egypt. In addition, many of the country's Romanian workers also took part.

In the Orthodox Church, the high point of Easter celebrations is the Ceremony of the Holy Fire at noon tomorrow, when the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is expected to be filled with worshippers.

In an Easter message yesterday, Armenian Patriarch Torokom Manoogian noted that "never before in the painful and troubled history of these Holy Lands, has hope proved so tantalizingly close, or so elusive." The Armenian patriarch spoke of trepidation at the threats to the peace process and ooted that, although the Church sought to divorce itself from politics, political considerations are inseparably enmeshed in the fabric of daily life.



A time to celebrate

Dancers pose yesterday at the Saharane festival held by Jews of Persian Kurdish origin at Ein Hemed near Jerusalem. (Brian Hestler)

# Back to tradition for Mimouna celebrations

By HAIM SHAPIRO

The aroma of charred meat that has permeated the official Mimouna celebrations in the past will be absent this year, according to Shalom Amoyal, chairman of Beyahad, the organizer of the event.

The Mimouna, marked on the evening and day following the last day of Pessah, is a Moroccan Jewish tradition. In Morocco, families would open their homes to Jewish and Moslem guests in the evening and then go out to celebrate in nature on the following day.

However, Amoyal said, the *mangal*, or barbecue grill, is an Israeli development which does not reflect the traditional spirit

of the holiday. He is especially unhappy about media reports which depict Mimouna celebrations as grilling meat or dancing women.

"We want to make a revolutionary change," Amoyal said.

Thus, this year, instead of the usual free-flowing celebration in Jerusalem's Sacher Park, there is to be a restrained gathering on Tuesday afternoon in Safra Square, adjoining the Jerusalem Municipality, with seats for 3,000 participants and standing room for another 15,000. There are to be booths representing 10 ethnic groups, including Ethiopians, Georgians, Persians, and Yemenites, he said.

The Mimouna will be officially opened on Monday night,

with the participation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the chief rabbis, in Ashdod, in a new Moroccan-style building on the beach. Amoyal said the port town had been chosen because it has a large concentration of Israelis of Moroccan origin and recently received large influxes of immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union.

In Jerusalem, he said, on Monday night, there are to be six central locations for welcoming guests.

Meanwhile, for those for whom the Mimouna has become inalterably associated with grilling meat, there will be modest entertainment at Sacher Park on Tuesday, Amoyal said.

**WEATHER**

Haifa 15-25  
Tel Aviv 16-24  
Jerusalem 17-28  
Beer Sheva 17-27  
Eilat 18-32

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear, drop in temperatures, rise in humidity.  
Shabbat: Additional drop in temperatures and rise in humidity.

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VALID TO 10/97 - 20/97

**AROUND THE WORLD**

	LOW	HIGH	WEATHER
Amsterdam	05	15	cloudy
Berlin	04	12	partly cloudy
Buenos Aires	12	28	partly cloudy
Cairo	09	26	cloudy
Chicago	05	15	cloudy
Copenhagen	06	16	clear
Frankfurt	06	16	clear
Helsinki	05	15	clear
Hong Kong	23	31	clear
Jakarta	26	32	partly cloudy
London	05	15	cloudy
Los Angeles	18	22	clear
Madrid	11	22	clear
Moscow	04	14	partly cloudy
New York	05	15	clear
Paris	04	14	clear
Rome	08	18	clear
Sao Paulo	17	27	clear
Sydney	18	28	clear
Tokyo	13	23	partly cloudy
Toronto	05	15	partly cloudy
Vancouver	05	15	partly cloudy
Zurich	05	15	clear

# Heat wave breaks - weekend expected cooler

By DAVID RUDGE

The heat wave that sent temperatures soaring to 40 degrees Celsius and over in many parts of the country broke yesterday afternoon, with the hot, dry easterly winds replaced by south-westerly gusts and cooler, more humid air.

The winds were strong enough in some places to create minor dust storms, reducing visibility on the roads.

The Meteorological Service reported that temperatures would gradually return to more

seasonable levels for the rest of the Pessah holiday. Meanwhile, the scorching heat did not prevent holidaymakers from setting off on planned trips around the country.

Heavy holiday traffic was reported on many routes, including the entrance to Jerusalem, roads leading to the Dead Sea and Eilat, and especially those heading north to the Galilee and Lake Kinneret.

Traffic jams were again reported at main road junctions in the North, where hotels and guest houses are fully booked for the

remainder of the holiday. There was also heavy traffic in the opposite direction, as those who spent the start of the holiday

in the North began returning southwards yesterday.

The forecast for the rest of the holiday is for cooler weather over

the weekend, with a chance of light rain in southern and central areas on Sunday, clearing by Monday.

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